Introduction

Students of Ecclesiastes have for many years enjoyed the benefits of two very thorough bibliographies by Reinhard Lehmann and Béatrice Perregaux Allisson, which cover the periods 1875–1988 and 1988–98 respectively.[1] In principle, earlier literature was dealt with in August Palm's *Die Qohelet-litteratur: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Exegese des Alten Testaments* (Mannheim: Heinrich Hogrefe, 1886). This slender (and rather uncommon) work is not at all a study in the history of interpretation, as its title pretends, but simply offers a list of works, generally without comment. Over forty-five pages, the list is presented once alphabetically, by author, and then again chronologically, which is convenient; even as a simple bibliography, however, the book falls far short of modern standards: it is often infuriatingly vague, and the details that it does include contain many errors, often inherited from the earlier lists on which Palm drew.

Scholars have frequently relied instead, therefore, on the extensive literature review that occupies pages 27–243 of Christian Ginsburg's commentary (§666, below), in the course of which Ginsburg traces the history of interpretation from earliest times until 1860. To be sure, this review seems likely always to remain a valuable resource: Ginsburg engages with the content of each work, sometimes providing long extracts or translations of key passages, and he does so in an enjoyably waspish way. His interests, however, are largely confined to interpretations of Ecclesiastes as a whole and to the issue of Solomonic authorship, which was still highly controversial at the time when he was writing: his review does not include, therefore, special studies of other themes or problems in the book (although he does devote much incidental effort to exposing linguistic errors in the work of various Christian Hebraists). Given the limited resources with which he was working, furthermore, it is hardly surprising to discover either that he overlooked some important general works as

1. Both are published within other volumes, Lehmann's in Diethelm Michel, *Untersuchungen Zur Eigenart Des Buches Qohelet* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 183; Berlin & New York: de Gruyter, 1989), 291–322; Perrigaux's in Martin Rose, *Rien de nouveau: nouvelles approches du livre de Qoheleth: avec une bibliographie, 1988-1998, élaborée par Béatrice Perregaux Allisson* (Orbis biblicus et orientalis 168; Freiburg, Sw.: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 557–629.

well, or that he was sometimes unaware of different versions or earlier editions of the books that he does include. Excellent though it is, Ginsburg's review has some serious limitations as a bibliographical resource, and the deficiencies of Palm's work mean that we have no proper bibliography for the period before 1875.

The primary purpose of this book is to remedy that situation, by providing a much fuller and more accurate account of the literature which takes advantage of the massively increased access to books, and to information about books, that the Internet has brought about about over the last few years. Because many studies of Ecclesiastes, however, are to be found within works on the Old Testament or the Bible as a whole, there will be much here, I hope, that will be of value to scholars of other biblical literature. Alongside many more scholarly works than were listed by Ginsburg and Palm, furthermore, I have also included poetic paraphrases and other compositions that throw light on the ways in which Ecclesiastes was being read and understood across this long period, and I have attempted, so far as is practical, to give a detailed account for each work both of its publication history and of any important circumstances surrounding its publication or transmission: a simple list of first editions can give no sense of the impact or accessibility of a book, and some works, moreover, evolved in very complicated ways. If it is to rest on secure foundations, modern work in the thriving fields of reception history and history of interpretation, in particular, has to work with accurate data. It can be difficult, however, to establish with confidence even the most basic information about a surprising number of early books, and it has taken me much time and effort to trace the details of all the works here — effort which I hope others will not now need to duplicate in their own work.

There are many reasons why such problems arise. On occasion it is, quite simply, because books tell lies – sometimes extravagantly, as when Voltaire's paraphrase was issued with multiple false imprints (§419) or Thomas Sternhold's reputation borrowed to sell a book (§34), sometimes aspirationally, as when the title promises more than the volume contains (e.g. §64), and sometimes in quite petty ways, as when new imprints and "revised" editions are created by sticking a new title-page on remaindered stock (e.g. §87, §265). This can have important consequences for anybody attempting to assess the circumstances or date: two of the Hebrew commentaries below (§548 and §549), for example, are found in editions with false imprints that might lead us to date them much earlier than they really are (which was probably their intention: the publishers were trying to evade restrictions on new Jewish printing). There can also be simple errors in books (e.g. §242), or volumes can give conflicting information about themselves (e.g. §529). Perhaps the most common problem, however, is that inaccuracies find their way into catalogues or bibliographies through simple mistakes. In the case of §644, for example, Charles Spurgeon gave the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown commentary a warm recommen-

dation in his influential list of commentaries (see the abbreviations, below), but seems to have felt so familiar with it that he did not trouble to check the title, and got it wrong. This error percolated into other evangelical sources, and a later re-print of the book even adopted the false title — but anyone using that title to search for the book in catalogues will get some very odd results. More often, librarians, some maybe many years ago, have misread information, misunderstood Roman numerals, or simply supplied misleading information — it is remarkable, for example, how many copies even of commentaries on Ecclesiastes, without the text, are catalogued with King Solomon as their primary (or sometimes sole) author, and so slip outside the reach of search engines looking for the real author. Confusion between "Ecclesiastes" and "Ecclesiasticus", furthermore, is close to endemic, whilst many books are tagged as commentaries on Ecclesiastes just because they mention a churchman ("Ecclesiastes" is widely used as a title) or a preacher. These mistakes can lead to others, and it is clear that books have sometimes been catalogued with a view more to what is said by existing entries, or standard bibliographies, than to what is printed on their title-pages.

Alongside lies and errors, the greatest problem in the past has been, simply, that it is difficult to obtain sufficient information. Early books may often declare themselves to be the "second edition", or suchlike, but it would be a mistake to assume that any book that does not must be a first edition; even if it is, that book may bear a date many years later than its first printing, and it has traditionally been hard to set a book in context. Even the major printed catalogues are of limited use for this: they can tell us about no more than the editions to be found in the particular collections that they represent. Now, of course, the situation has changed dramatically. The very rapid development of online resources in the last five years has made it possible for scholars not just to discover many works and editions outside the libraries to which they have direct access, but also in most cases actually to examine those works. Electronic union catalogues, like COPAC in the UK, or the more ambitious WorldCat developed by OCLC, embrace so many individual catalogues that, increasingly, we have access to information about almost every edition of every book held by a library anywhere. Obviously, this has many significant advantages, but it has not been accompanied by a proportionate development of tools to deal with the new mass of materials. Union catalogues are vulnerable not just to mistakes in, but to relatively minor differences between different catalogue entries. Accordingly, searches for books will usually turn up multiple results even when there are not really multiple editions, while a single error or strange practice in some distant library can create phantom editions with new dates, or conceal real editions from view. Some valuable assistance in this area is provided by the standardized bibliographies, commonly described as short title catalogues, which are slowly building authoritative lists of published books, at least for the period up to about 1800. Accordingly, I have

provided references to these catalogues wherever possible: this has the added advantage that some of the online versions are increasingly providing a way to organize the many millions of digital images now available, which are not always easy to find any other way. More generally, though, I hope that by filling some gaps and correcting some errors, this book will itself help to bring some order, at least to one small corner of the chaos.

Of course, this is not a complete account of everything written about Ecclesiastes. Even apart from the fact that further works will doubtless continue to appear in the catalogues and databases (as they have done in some numbers even since I began this work), and the probability that I have simply overlooked some, it has also been necessary to set certain boundaries. My rule of thumb has been to include anything that seems genuinely to be engaging with the text or thought of Ecclesiastes, even if that is in the context of a work about the Bible as a whole or some other topic (although I have not, of course, included mere passing mentions, except where they are significant in some way). This includes a considerable number of homiletic, devotional, or literary, as well as scholarly works. Some published sermons are included, where I have been able to determine that they involve such engagement; a small number of popular commentaries have been excluded, on the other hand, where they have really had little or nothing of substance to say about the text itself, or have merely used it as a hook on which to hang other discussions. I have also excluded simple translations or presentations of the text, along with translations of the Bible (even those that have light annotations, such as Luther's Bible): there are many good bibliographical resources in that area already, and this book would have been very much longer had I included them. The other main exclusion has been of works that were written before the period covered here: there are, of course, numerous early printed editions of patristic and medieval works on Ecclesiastes, as well as rabbinic bibles and various types of anthology. Even in that last category, though, I have made rare exceptions for posthumous publication of works by recent writers, and all of these boundaries are necessarily more porous than they sound: somebody else would doubtless have made different decisions about some of the works included or excluded. The most difficult decisions have concerned books that have been unavailable to me and about which I can discover nothing from other sources: in such cases, I have generally had to make judgments on the basis of the title alone.

A significant number of the works assembled have been almost lost to sight, many undeservedly so, and it has required much detective work to track them down from vague references in contemporary literature. For a very few it may be too late, and we have references to their existence, but no evidence that any copies of them survive. Donald Wing described such books as "ghosts", and I have listed them where appropriate, partly because it may be important to know, at least, that they did exist, and partly because they may yet turn up,

one way or another: several on my original list managed to elude discovery for a long time because of cataloguing mistakes or serious errors in the original citations. Conversely, I have also included entries, with appropriate warnings, for a few books which are attested repeatedly in earlier bibliographies, but which seem never actually to have existed. Of course, it is difficult to know whether some books are ghosts or myths. The same is true for individual editions: some of the early bibliographers offer dates and places of publication which appear quite often to have been supplied from memory or conjecture, and occasionally to have been plucked from thin air; sometimes, though, they may be the last clue to the existence of a rare or extinct edition. In general, I have omitted supposed editions which seem wholly implausible, and listed without comment only those which I have seen, or for which I have strong evidence; there is a grey area of "reported" editions which I cannot confirm, but usually mention.

Lacking the gift of immortality, I have not attempted to read all the works listed here cover-to-cover, and a number of them are anyway either written in languages that I do not read, or accessible only in libraries that I have not visited. All the same, I have been able at least to browse through the great majority of them, usually online, and I have often given a general description of their content where this is not obvious from the title. I have not attempted, however, to provide the sort of summaries or assessments offered in Ginsburg's much shorter list (to which references are given where appropriate). Similarly, I have cited secondary literature when this provides further information about the publication, or forms the basis of my own remarks, but I have not tried to provide systematic bibliographies for any of the works or writers. I have given myself some leeway, to be sure, in discussing aspects of the background or reception where these are especially interesting: it would seem to be a shame, for example, not to mention the grisly fate of William Dodd, even if he only died some years after completing his commentary (§438), or to ignore the consequences to his career of Samuel Davidson's *Text of the Old Testament* (§635). Fundamentally, however, this is not an exercise in history or evaluation, but a tool intended to facilitate work on, or with the early printed literature.

Each entry lists the date, author, a representation of the title, publication details, and the language(s) of the piece. The name of the author is given as found, with alternatives (most commonly, the original form of Latinised names and the transliterated/anglicised form of Hebrew names) given in brackets. For some texts, produced in connection with disputations or dissertations, several names are given, and I have listed the roles of each individual as described. In such cases, some catalogues have conventionally listed the president as author, but it is frequently difficult to say what responsibility, if any, each participant actually had for the content (and this has sometimes proved a dangerous trap for the unwary). Usually, I have given titles in full, sometimes

omitting (with "…" to mark the gap) details of the author given within the title; the principal exception is for Hebrew books, where the title may be part of a very lengthy description, which takes up much of the title-page, but says little directly about the content. I have retained the original spelling and capitalisation, with some adjustment for typographic conventions, such as the many uses of "v" for "u", and of "j" for "i" (and vice versa), especially in Latin titles, which we would now regard as odd. Some titles are set out in striking ways by the original books: I have preserved major peculiarities only where necessary (§183 is the prime instance), but have followed the original punctuation and capitalisation where possible. For the place of publication, I have given the modern name, (e.g. "Thessaloniki" for "Salonica", "Lviv" for "Lemberg"), and the common English form where there is one (e.g. "Rome", not "Roma"). The names of publishers have been given in the standard form when one exists, usually following the CERL Thesaurus, and in full where possible (a task which has itself required much research, and which has in some cases defeated me). Again, the roles of each individual are not always clear, and early publishing could be a very complicated business, which often resists the simple place/publisher format that we use for most modern books. Printer *a* might be working at the press of printer *b* (his employer, parent, sibling, or some deceased predecessor), who might be printing the book to be sold by booksellers *c* and *d*, or perhaps trying to sell it for himself or herself, with other individuals investing in the project. Correspondingly, some works have single printers but multiple publishers, who appear either in lengthy lists, or on a range of special title-pages, each creating a separate imprint of the same book. The language of each work will be usually obvious from the title for those who know that language, but since few will know them all, I have stated it in every case, permitting myself some anachronisms, such as "Italian" rather than "Tuscan". Finally, cross-references to catalogues, or similar information, have been given in square brackets, at the end of each entry where relevant to the entry as a whole, otherwise in the appropriate place. Square brackets are used elsewhere to indicate information that has been supplied from a source other than the book itself, e.g. "J[ohn]" where the original has only an initial, or "[Paris]" where the place of publication is known, but not specified by the book itself.

There are three indexes. The first is of individuals responsible for the content of books and articles, mostly authors, but also translators, editors, and others. The second is of individuals and firms responsible for production and distribution: printers, publishers, and booksellers. The place(s) with which they are associated by the relevant works are listed alongside. The third index, aimed at biblical scholars, is of passages from Ecclesiastes specifically mentioned in titles of works or in my descriptions.